

March 3, 2010

CPSC Adopts APSP Language on Unblockable Drains

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission approved a final Technical Guidance document on the implementation of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act, with a vote on Mar. 1. The Technical Guidance includes the APSP-advocated interpretive rule on unblockable drains. The unblockable definition was based on the [testimony](#) from APSP's Carvin DiGiovanni and [public comments](#), submitted by APSP

This is a critical issue because the VGB states that public pools and spas that have properly designed multiple drains or an unblockable drain are not required to install additional devices or systems such as an SVRS or shut-off switch.

As a result of the CPSC vote, drains with covers that meet this criteria will be recognized as unblockable, even if the sump or pipe size is considerably smaller.

"This vote represents a significant victory for safety and the pool and spa industry," said DiGiovanni, APSP's senior director, technical and standards. "This will make more options — and more cost-effective options — available to manufacturers, builders, owners and operators, while ensuring that suction fittings or cover assemblies certified as unblockable are safe for use on a single outlet.

"This decision, which adheres to the language in the ANSI/APSP-7 Entrapment Avoidance Standard and the ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 Standard for Suction Fittings, is another endorsement of APSP standards," added DiGiovanni. "It represents the viewpoints of many experts on the standards committees who wanted to raise the awareness that if you decide to install an unblockable drain that it requires a systems approach to doing it correctly rather than just swapping out to a VGB compliant cover. And on the other hand let's not forget that the VGB Act does allow for the option for pools to be built without drains."

The Commission has yet to announce its decision on 1406 of VGB, which deals with grants to states.

The approved CPSC Staff definition follows:

"Unblockable Drain: A suction outlet defined as all components, including the sump and/or body, cover/grate, and hardware such that its perforated (open) area cannot be

shadowed by the area of the 18 x 23 Body Blocking Element of ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 2007 and that the rated flow through the remaining open area cannot create a suction force in excess of the removal force values in Table 1 of that Standard. All suction outlet covers, manufactured or field-fabricated, shall be certified as meeting the applicable requirements of the ASME/ANSI A112.19.8 standard.”

All public CPSC documents on VGB are available [here](#) . Select “Pools, Whirlpools, Hot Tubs, Spas for a list of documents.”